

the public, particularly the news media that questions the need for me to call attention to this deficit and the debt, the fact that we would be far healthier fiscally if we had dealt with this problem before today.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, I have to comment on this afternoon's veto by the President of the budget. I can respect the fact that the President may disagree very strongly, very deeply with our priorities versus what his priorities would be for spending. But I would submit that it is a disservice to the electorate and to the Congress and to the Government of the United States for the President not to tell us how he would balance the budget. We have given him a budget. We have tried to tell him how we would do it. Frankly, as a Member of Congress, I would welcome the opportunity to see his version of how he would balance the budget in 7 years.

I think that if he would present us his alternatives, if he would stand on principle and tell us what does he really believe in the terms of his spending priorities over the next 7 years, then I think, for starters, we could start to have a healthy debate in this body over exactly what we need to do to balance the budget in the next 7 years.

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OUR ENVIRONMENTAL BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ENSIGN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. HINCHEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of people here this evening who are concerned about the environment, and I will speak out in a special order concerning environmental issues. I want to address my remarks to the Clean Water Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Clean Water Act was one of the great victories of the past 25 years—a bipartisan success. It is often said it was enacted after the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland caught fire and the country saw how far the quality of our waterways had fallen. But smell also played a part. Waterfront property was no longer considered a plus in many cities: Rivers were open sewers. Parks were abandoned and beaches were closed. Lakes and rivers—like Lake Erie—were declared dead: pollution killed nearly all the fish.

The Safe Drinking Water Act was another bipartisan victory. The idea was simple: that everyone would be able to trust the quality of municipal water, and would not have to fear that their health would be threatened if they moved to a different community. No public health law was more important than protecting water safety. People recognized that Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act were also some of the best property rights protection laws around. No one wants the value of their property to decline be-

cause of someone else's unhealthy or unattractive pollution.

This year, both laws are under attack. We're told the Clean Water Act is too strict, that it makes our lakes and rivers too clean. We are told that the Safe Drinking Water Act makes our water too healthy. Can we not all live with weaker standards, dirtier water?

The advocates of weaker laws are confident their rights will still be protected. They can afford better quality waterfront property. They can afford to vacation in the best places. They can afford bottled water for their children. And they do not want to pay to protect the common good, to protect the drinking water and the waterways that ordinary people, ordinary families will use.

We saw the Clean Water Act under attack in the amendments that the House approved in May that would weaken the law. Of course, the Senate has not acted on that bill, and we know that if it ever reached the President, it would face a veto. We saw the Safe Drinking Water Act under attack in the riders on the VA-HUD appropriations bill. The rider that would have prohibited EPA from tightening standards in lead in drinking water—so important to children's health—was the most egregious example. But that attempt was thwarted too.

Does that mean everything will be fine? No. Money is at the heart of this debate, and the strategy now to attack clean water and safe drinking water is to cut off their money supply. If the EPA does not have the money to enforce the Clean Water Act, it will start to die a slow death. It will bring back the open sewers and flammable streams of long ago.

Let us get down to specifics. The VA-HUD appropriations bill makes sharp cuts in funding for the EPA. It would cut funding for enforcement of public health standards—including clean water and safe drinking water—by 17 percent.

We hear these days about the importance of letting States do the job. Fine—but this bill would cut funding for State loans to improve drinking water quality by 45 percent.

Do you like to see sludge in your rivers and on your beaches? Then you will love to see these cuts. The bill would cut 30 percent from the request for funding for waste treatment plants. Once again, this is money that would go to the States. The bill will make it more difficult for them to help themselves and to help their people.

We have still got some of those notorious riders in here too. It is nice to know the bill no longer prohibits EPA from reducing lead levels in water. But it does prohibit EPA from setting a standard for radon in water—even though radon is linked to lung cancer. It does prohibit EPA from vetoing use of fill containing toxic waste in rivers and lakes.

The VA-HUD appropriations bill covers only 1 year. So it is easy to say

these cuts merely delay action a little bit. But put these cuts in the context of the 7-year budget plans that are dominating the news these days. Would enforcement funding increase during the course of those 7 years? Would States get more money to address their water problems later in the course of those 7 years? No. The budget envisions 7 lean years for environmental cleanup and enforcement.

They say Marie Antoinette said of the ordinary people of her time: "Let them eat cake" if they cannot buy bread. The cuts in the EPA budget effectively say if they want clean water, let them drink Perrier.

Should we be willing to pay the relatively small amount extra to buy our constituents—all of our constituents, not just the Perrier drinkers—the safest water available? We should. Should we be willing to spend the small amount extra to keep making progress on cleaner rivers, lakes, and beaches? We should. I think the average family wants to know that the children will have safe, healthy water to drink, and clean beaches to play on. I think they expect their government to give them that assurance. I do not think they want to see these laws allowed to wither away for lack of funding. I do not think they want to make that sacrifice so that some people will have a little more money to spend on designer water or on airfare to a clean beach.

SENIOR CITIZENS RIGHT TO WORK ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, a very historic act was passed this week with the bipartisan assistance of Members of both sides of the aisle, the Senior Citizens Right To Work Act, H.R. 2684. This legislation will address the problem that current tax laws impose harsh penalties on senior citizens, especially those who continue to work beyond the age of 65. After years of hard work and valuable contributions to our Nation, Mr. Speaker, working senior citizens should not be penalized. We should be encouraging, not discouraging, seniors to make a better life for themselves. That is what our great country is founded upon, pursuing the American dream. As Federal legislators we must be committed to helping seniors maintain their independence and quality of life. That is why I was proud to speak to help support with my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats alike, H.R. 2684.

What this will allow, Mr. Speaker, is current law says that those seniors under 70 that are currently making funds up to \$11,280, there are no deductions from their Social Security, but if they make a dollar over, there is going to be a deduction. Under this new legislation a modern approach was taken. What will happen is seniors, over the

next 7 years, will be able to earn up to \$30,000 a year without deductions from Social Security.

There is another initiative by the U.S. House of Representatives to in fact make it easier for seniors to be independent, to live on their own and to earn more funds. I also feel that the eldercare tax credit, which will help families, is a very important and positive initiative of this 104th Congress.

In addition the House has passed the rollback of the unfair 1993 tax increase on Social Security.

But the final initiative, Mr. speaker, I think which is also important, is the opportunity to save Medicare, to make Medicare more viable, to make sure it is preserved and will in fact provide benefits for seniors in this generation and the next generation. What we will do in the proposal that is before the Congress is to reduce paperwork costs. Right now, Mr. Speaker, 12 percent of Federal dollars from Medicare go to paperwork. That is ridiculous. Businesses would not stand for it. We need to reduce that cost through electronic billing, et cetera.

We also have \$30 billion a year in fraud, waste, and abuse in the current Medicare System. That must be eliminated, and the savings go back to make sure we have the health care dollars for our senior citizens.

We also have the initiative to make sure we sustain medical training dollars for interns and residents, the indirect costs for medical education, but as a separate line item, and to make sure those funds that were used in prior Medicare budgets be used for Medicare for our seniors.

But the final option which I think really makes Medicare more modern, more accessible, and certainly more beneficial to seniors; while we are going to maintain fee for service for Medicare subscribers, we are also offering managed care as an option which may include pharmaceuticals and eyeglasses for no extra costs and also Medicare Plus, which is the medisave account which will have seniors who want to have a system where the dollars they get will be used for their health care, but whatever money is saved goes back in their pocket or, in fact, is rolled over to the next year.

So I am looking forward to working with the other side of the aisle, making sure that we save Medicare, working with the President, and while there may have been a veto of the current legislation, I am hopeful that working together with the White House we can make a Medicare plan that is going to be good for our seniors, will make sure we restore fiscal responsibility to our budgets, but making sure our health care is there for those who are in need.

NO VITAL AMERICAN INTERESTS AT RISK IN BOSNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, we are now 8 days away from signing the Bosnia accord in Paris. This will seal the deployment of up to 40,000 troops into the Bosnian theater. That is right. The 20,000 troops that have been talked about include only the Army ground personnel in Bosnia. It does not include additional U.S. forces in German, the Adriatic, the Balkans, or in Italy.

Mr. Speaker, the President has yet to specify the vital United States interests at risk in Bosnia or the detailed and specific plans that he promised, the plans to achieve the objective that we have in Bosnia or the exit strategy, that he promised to bring our men and women safely home. The interests outlined by the President were broad universal ideals that would apply anywhere in the world. He made no case for a specific deployment in Bosnia. Sad experience has taught us that it is easy to send troops in but very difficult for them to accomplish the objective after they are there and even more difficult to get out in a timely and honorable way.

Besides all this, it will all be done on borrowed money. We do not have the money for it. It is all borrowed money.

I want to call everyone's attention to an article in today's Baltimore Sun. The headline is "Croats Seen Burning Town That They Must Give Back To The Serbs." It states that the U.N. condemned the scorched earth policy being carried out by the Croatian forces. These forces were working in organized burning teams. Mr. Speaker, this defies the peace agreement and shows that many in that tragic area will not honor it. When rival armies burn each other's towns, I find it hard to believe the President's statement that U.S. troops will not be entering a combat zone.

Another article we are mentioning was written by former Secretary of Defense Weinberger in this week's edition of the Forbes magazine. He asks:

Is it isolationism or is it failure to accept the burdens of leadership that leads me to conclude that we should not send troops to this ill-starred enterprise? I think neither. The U.S. has always been, and should always be, willing to accept the burdens of keeping peace and maintaining freedom for ourselves and our allies. But when—after two years of fatal, bumbling inaction—we cobble together a paper agreement solving none of the conflicts that started this war, it is simply common sense that opposes deploying any soldiers, U.S. or NATO, to a mission inviting disaster.

That is the end of the quote. Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more, and I submit the entire article for the RECORD:

[From Forbes, Dec. 18, 1995]

GETTING OUR TROOPS INTO THE TRENCHES BY
CHRISTMAS

(By Caspar W. Weinberger)

President Clinton's personal pledge to send 20,000 U.S. troops to join 40,000 NATO troops in the Bosnian cauldron invites another foreign policy disaster.

The Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims have agreed, sort of, that Bosnia will give up 49% of itself to the Bosnian Serbs, who

promptly said that that was not enough. The key question that must be answered before we send in our troops is whether there is a peace agreement here that is likely to be kept by all the warring parties. If there is not, any "peacekeeping" mission will be futile. Despite chief negotiator Richard Holbrooke's hype and President Clinton's speech to the nation, the sad fact is that we have no such agreement.

PIPE DREAMS

The agreement is supposed to create a stable, new "multiethnic Bosnian country," with Sarajevo as its multiethnic capital. The agreement provides for a partitioned Bosnia governed by a federal parliament with control over foreign policy and some economic policy, but having two separate armies, two police forces and separate parliaments—all overseen by a rotating collective Bosnian presidency. Even Rube Goldberg couldn't have dreamed up a more complex design than this.

This agreement accepts the principle of two Bosnias, which is what the Serbs have wanted all along. But within hours of the highly dramatic initialing in Dayton, Bosnian Serb president, Radovan Karadzic, typically wavered back and forth between denouncing the agreement, half-heartedly accepting it, saying that Bosnia's 100,000 Serbs would fight against it, with Sarajevo becoming another "Beirut," and then later saying that maybe he would accept the agreement. Some of Karadzic's behavior may well be explained by the fact that before taking up brutal atrocities and mass murder, Karadzic was a practicing psychiatrist with a record of what is politely called "instability." Physician, heal thyself.

It is quite true that Serbia's President Slobodan Milosevic—no slouch at committing atrocities himself, but hoping to avoid indictment as a war criminal—has agreed to this arrangement. The very instability the agreement creates will offer Milosevic another opportunity to realize his goal of a Greater Serbia, backed by his Russian allies. We have allowed the Russians to become a part of the "intervention force," but to satisfy their sensibilities they will be allowed to report to U.S. Division Commander, Major General William L. Nash instead of being placed under direct NATO command.

The 20,000 U.S. soldiers will be deployed along a narrow, 2.5-mile-wide strip separating Bosnia's Muslim and Serb armies. If our forces are attacked, they will fight back, even though they are heavily outnumbered. Communications, exit strategies, command and control? Be patient. But if our troops are engaged, Mr. Clinton's prediction of "some casualties" will seem modest.

We have insisted that neither Dr. Karadzic nor that least lovable character, Bosnian Serb general Ratko Mladic, be permitted to have any role in the future because of their indictments as war criminals. But neither Karadzic nor Mladic has agreed to this. General Mladic is renowned for defying all attempts at civilian control of his army, regardless of any agreement. After all, he made and violated 34 cease-fire agreements.

Is it isolationism or is it failure to accept the burdens of leadership that leads me to conclude that we should not send troops to this ill-starred enterprise? I think neither. The U.S. has always been, and should always be, willing to accept the burdens of keeping peace and maintaining freedom for ourselves and our allies. But when—after two years of fatal, bumbling inaction—we cobble together a paper agreement solving none of the conflicts that started this war, it is simply common sense that opposes deploying any soldiers, U.S. or NATO, to a mission inviting disaster.